

Duxbury Rural and Historical Society

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KING CAESAR HOUSE - DUXBURY, MASSACHUSETTS

IN APPRECIATION OF GARVIN BAWDEN

Back in 1965, the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society was quartered in cramped rooms in the Drew House, with very little space to store, let alone exhibit, the ever-increasing records and relics of Duxbury. Meetings had to be held at The First Parish Church if more than a handful attended; and membership consisted of a relatively small group of faithful oldtimers with a deep seated interest in the past history of Duxbury.

At the King Caesar House, after the last of the Westons had left the mansion the Knapp family had lived happily, taking solicitous care of the handsome Federal style building. Later on, Dr. H. C. Bumpus owned the estate, eventually selling it to Madame Weber-Fulup and Miss Alice Moran. Then early in 1965 the fine old place had to be sold; but this time there was no loving family to assume its care, and consternation arose as to the

future of this beautiful and historic house.

Almost spontaneously the idea was born of acquiring the house for the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society, and quickly a 6 months option was sought to allow time to raise the very considerable funds necessary. Then it was that Garvin Bawden (Mich to his host of friends) was brought into the picture to lead the drive.

Mich had raised several million dollars for the Massachusetts Institute of Technology, but now he was retired, and it took considerable persuasion by Bill Nash and others of his friends to overcome his reluctance. But once committed, Mich swung into action with characteristic enthusiasm. A preliminary luncheon meeting of key Duxbury citizens uncovered real enthusiasm for the project, and soon a work group was organized and an impressive

supporting committee assembled. In May, advance solicitation began, and a month later the major fund drive opened.

Mich Bawden seemed to be everywhere, exhorting his working committee, enlisting support in every phase of Duxbury life, from the service clubs to the men's and women's community clubs, athletic groups and garden clubs, the churches, the schools, persuading most of them to participate actively, including even school children, who eagerly collected nickels and dimes for their share.

Two great thermometers were erected, one at Snug Harbor and the other at Hall's Corner, where weekly Mich climbed a ladder to paint another few degrees of progress onto the scale, until at last the total burst through the top in a spectacular fountain of accomplishment. Not only had enough been raised to buy the

King Caesar House, but enough more to make needed repairs, and on top of that provide a limited endowment.

A victory like this was typical of Mich, a man of enthusiasms which he could convey to others, a man loyal to his friends and to his ideals, and always a man of concern. Possibly the drive for the acquisition of the King Caesar House could have been put over by some other leader, but the spirit in which Mich worked not only accomplished its specific purpose, but it also started the Duxbury Rural & Historical Society on a new era which has resulted in widely increased usefulness and service to the community.